

UNAMENDED CLAIMS

2. (Unchanged) The method of claim 1, wherein the applying step includes decreasing air pressure in a vicinity of the specimen to change the at least one dimension of the subsurface defect.

3. (Unchanged) The method of claim 1, wherein the applying step includes disturbing the specimen using ultrasonic, acoustic or mechanical energy.

4. (Unchanged) The method of claim 1, wherein the applying step includes:  
placing the specimen in a chamber; and  
generating a vacuum in the chamber to change at least one dimension of the subsurface defect.

5. (Unchanged) The method of claim 1, wherein the applying step includes:  
placing a sealed enclosure on the surface of the specimen; and  
generating a vacuum in the sealed enclosure to change the at least one dimension of the subsurface defect.

16. (Unchanged) The method of claim 15, wherein the sealed enclosure is divided into two sections such that the vacuum generated in said applying step produces a vacuum in one of the two sections.

17. (Unchanged) The method of claim 15, wherein said applying step further includes the step of increasing the air pressure in the sealed enclosure, wherein said

generating step includes generating a first active thermographic image when the pressure is increased and generating a second active thermographic image when the pressure is decreased, and wherein the method further comprises the step of comparing the first and second active thermographic images to detect the subsurface defect.

19. (Unchanged) The apparatus of claim 18, wherein said heater is at least one flashlamp that directs heat to the specimen surface.

21. (Unchanged) The apparatus of claim 20, wherein the sealed enclosure is divided into two sections, and wherein the vacuum pump generates the vacuum inside the sealed enclosure in one of the two sections.

22. (Unchanged) The apparatus of claim 20, wherein the heater is a flashlamp disposed inside the sealed enclosure to direct light to the specimen surface.

24. (Unchanged) The apparatus of claim 23, wherein the chamber includes a window, wherein the heater is a flashlamp located outside the chamber and directs light through the window to heat the specimen, and wherein at least part of the image generator is located outside the chamber.

25. (Unchanged) The apparatus of claim 23, wherein the chamber includes a window, wherein the heater is a flashlamp located inside the chamber and directs light on the specimen to heat the specimen, and wherein at least part of the image generator is located outside the chamber.

26. (Unchanged) The apparatus of claim 23, wherein at least one of the heater and the image generator are located inside the chamber.

27. (Unchanged) The apparatus of claim 18, wherein said heater is a lamp that continuously directs heat to the specimen, and wherein said applying means includes an attachment that couples to the surface of the specimen to apply the force.

28. (Unchanged) The apparatus of claim 27, wherein said attachment provides the force via ultrasonic, acoustic, or mechanical energy.